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JC542 U.S. PTO

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# UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

| | |
|---|---|
| Attorney Docket No. | 1142 |
| First Inventor or Application Identifier | Keith Rose |
| Title | METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR RECEIVING A SUBSCRIPTION FOR A SECURITY |
| Express Mail Label No. | EL528759378US |

## APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent applicaiton contents.

**ADDRESS TO:** Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Patent Application
Washington, DC 20231

1. [X] * Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)
(Submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing)

2. [X] Specification [Total Pages 16]
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
- Descriptive title of the Invention
- Cross References to Related Applications
- Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
- Reference to Microfiche Appendix
- Background of the Invention
- Brief Summary of the Invention
- Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
- Detailed Description
- Claim(s)
- Abstract of the Disclosure

3. [X] Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 2]

4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 4]
a. [X] Newly executed (original or copy)
b. [ ] Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed)
[Note Box 5 below]
**DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)**
i. [ ] Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).

5. [ ] Incorporation By Reference (useable if Box 4b is checked)
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered to be part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.

6. [ ] Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)

7. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
(if applicable, all necessary)
a. [ ] Computer Readable Copy
b. [ ] Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
c. [ ] Statement verifying identity of above copies

### ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

8. [X] Assignment Papers (cover sheet & documents)
9. [ ] 37 C.F.R.§3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee) [ ] Power of Attorney
10. [ ] English Translation Document (if applicable)
11. [ ] Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 [ ] Copies of IDS Citations
12. [ ] Preliminary Amendment
13. [X] Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503) (Should be specifically itemized)
14. [ ] * Small Entity Statement(s) (PTO/SB/09-12) [ ] Statement filed in prior application, Status still proper and desired
15. [ ] Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) (if foreign priority is claimed)
16. [ ] Other: ................................................

* A new statement is required to be entitled to pay small entity fees, except where one has been filed in a prior application and is being relied upon.

**17. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION,** check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment·

[ ] Continuation  [ ] Divisional  [ ] Continuation-in-part (CIP)  of prior application No: _____

Prior application information:  Examiner _____  Group / Art Unit _____

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JC542 U.S. PTO 09/502313 02/11/00

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR RECEIVING A SUBSCRIPTION FOR A

SECURITY

Inventors

Keith Rose

Karin Riley

10          Coreen Kaplan

Field of the Invention

The present invention is related to computer software, and more specifically to computer software for investing using the Internet.

15          Background of the Invention

Mutual funds allow investors to invest in a basket of two or more securities that are managed by the mutual fund manager. The securities in the mutual fund may be selected by the manager using the manger's skill, or may be selected

20     using a fixed criteria, such as the conventional S&P 500 index. When a mutual fund is operating, its share price may fluctuate with the value of the securities in the fund.

Before a mutual fund begins operating, investors may be allowed to subscribe to the fund. To subscribe to the fund, an investor commits a certain amount of money to the fund or commits to buying a certain number of shares in the

5   fund in advance of its operation. The period during which such commitments are allowed is known as the subscription period. When the fund begins operating at the end of the subscription period, the investor purchases shares of the fund at its opening price.

10   When a broker is used to subscribe to a mutual fund, the broker informs the fund manager, usually prior to the operation of the fund, how many investors have subscribed to the fund and how much money they have committed. If the opening share price is fixed in advance, the broker may

15   inform the fund manager of the number of shares to which investors have subscribed in place of the amount of money committed.

Conventional brokers have salespeople who solicit such subscriptions to their investors, using conventional

20   methods such as placing telephone calls or mailing direct mail materials. Investors subscribe over the telephone, or by using a reply card received with the direct mail materials or in person at the broker's office. However,

the cost of such solicitations is relatively high because

the response rate of such a solicitation is relatively low.

The cost of a mailing may be less than the cost of a

telephone solicitation, however because the potential

5    investor must take the time and effort to respond, the

response rate may be far lower than the response rate of a

telephone solicitation, making both forms of solicitation

prohibitively expensive.  Such costs can drive up the costs

of subscriptions, which can limit the availability of new

10   funds.

Many investors use online brokerage services.  An

online brokerage service may allow an investor to subscribe

to a mutual fund before its operation by filling in one or

more online forms using a browser on a personal computer

15   coupled to the Internet.  The information is returned to

the online brokerage using conventional CGI techniques.

However, investors using online brokerage services may not

have a relationship with a specific broker, and so a

telephone call informing the investor of a new subscription

20   to a mutual fund may not be welcome.  Because many

investors of an online brokerage service prefer little

intrusion from the service, receiving mass mailings

announcing subscription offerings may also be unwanted.

As a result, online brokerages may simply include the subscription with the other funds they sell.  Because of the large number of funds that may be offered to investors using an online brokerage, a subscription offering may get

5    lost among the dozens or even hundreds of funds the online brokerage offers to its customers.  Identifying a subscription offering using an online brokerage can require the user to locate the subscription offering manually by sifting through a number of web pages describing mutual

10   funds.  To find a fund among such a wealth of information, the user has to go looking for the subscription, having heard about through another source such as an advertisement, or simply be lucky enough stumble upon information about the subscription, for example while

15   browsing information about similar funds.  Because of the time and effort and luck involved in locating subscription offerings using an online broker, subscription offerings using online brokers have had limited success.

What is needed is a method and apparatus that can

20   inform an investor who uses an online brokerage of a subscription offering in a cost effective, minimally intrusive manner without requiring the investor to manually search for the subscription offering on the online

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brokerage's web site, and can allow the investor to subscribe to the mutual fund with a minimum of effort.

## Summary of Invention

A method and apparatus places a notice of the
5   subscription offering for a mutual fund on the home page of a web site. The notice may include a link that is capable of directing the user of the web site to a page on which the user may subscribe to the mutual fund. A summary of the amount of the user's subscription is recorded and
10  transmitted to the mutual fund management along with similar information from other users of the web site.

Because the notice is provided on a home page of a web site, users using that home page are likely to see it, yet the method and apparatus is far less intrusive that a
15  telephone call or direct mailing. Because following the link will take the user to a form which can be used to subscribe to the fund with a minimum of effort, users may be more likely to subscribe to the fund than if they had received a mailing. Because the cost of implementing such
20  a notice is very low, a wide variety of new funds may be made available that could not have been offered before.

5

## Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure **1** is a block schematic diagram of a conventional computer system.

Figure **2** is a flowchart illustrating a method of
5   receiving a subscription to a mutual fund according to one embodiment of the present invention.

## Detailed Description of a Preferred Embodiment

The present invention may be implemented as computer software on a conventional computer system.  Referring now
10  to Figure **1**, a conventional computer system **150** for practicing the present invention is shown.  Processor **160** retrieves and executes software instructions stored in storage **162** such as memory, which may be Random Access Memory (RAM) and may control other components to perform
15  the present invention.  Storage **162** may be used to store program instructions or data or both.  Storage **164**, such as a computer disk drive or other nonvolatile storage, may provide storage of data or program instructions.  In one embodiment, storage **164** provides longer term storage of
20  instructions and data, with storage **162** providing storage for data or instructions that may only be required for a shorter time than that of storage **164**.  Input device **166** such as a computer keyboard or mouse or both allows user

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input to the system **150**.  Output **168**, such as a display or printer, allows the system to provide information such as instructions, data or other information to the user of the system **150**.  Storage input device **170** such as a

5     conventional floppy disk drive or CD-ROM drive accepts via input **172** computer program products **174** such as a conventional floppy disk or CD-ROM or other nonvolatile storage media that may be used to transport computer instructions or data to the system **150**.  Computer program

10    product **174** has encoded thereon computer readable program code devices **176**, such as magnetic charges in the case of a floppy disk or optical encodings in the case of a CD-ROM which are encoded as program instructions, data or both to configure the computer system **150** to operate as described

15    below.

In one embodiment, each computer system **150** is a conventional Sun Microsystems Ultra 10 workstation running the Solaris operating system commercially available from Sun Microsystems of Mountain View, California, a Pentium-

20    compatible personal computer system such as are available from Dell computer Corporation of Round Rock, Texas running the Windows (95, 98 or NT) operating system commercially available from Microsoft Corporation of Redmond Washington or a Macintosh computer system running the MacOS

commercially available from Apple Computer Corporation of Cupertino, California and the Netscape browser commercially available from Netscape Computer Corporation of Mountain View, California although other systems may be used.

5    Referring now to Figure **2**, a method for receiving a subscription to a mutual fund is shown according to one embodiment of the present invention.

A home page is requested and provided **210** to the user via the Internet. A home page is a web page that a user

10   will receive if the user types the domain name of the website without specifying a particular page or filename. For example, the address "http://www.schwab.com" will return the home page of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc., and therefore that page is a home page. The address

15   "http://www.schwab.com/SchwabNOW/navigation/mainFrameSet/0, 4528,778,00.html" would not be a home page unless the server that receives the request for a page at "http://www.schwab.com" is set up to return it as a default. The fact that a home page has a filename, such as

20   index.htm or the like, does not mean it is not a home page, even though it may be accessed using the address "http://www.schwab.com/index.htm", because the use of the filename in the address is not necessary.

The home page provided in step **210** contains a notice of a subscription offering for a mutual fund or other security and a link, such as an HTML link, that the user can follow to reach a web page containing a form or other

5    capability allowing the user to subscribe to the mutual fund before the fund is in operation. The link contains a reference to a web page, although the page to which the link refers need not be a page with which a user may subscribe to the fund.

10    In one embodiment, the notice contains the link. The link may be in text form, or it may be a banner similar to a conventional banner. The banner may be animated, scrolling or the like.

A request for the web page to which the link is

15    pointing is received **212**. The web page to which the link is pointing may or may not contain a form that allows the user to participate in the subscription offered in step **210**, but if it is not, the page will contain a link that ultimately may be followed, for example, via one or more

20    additional links, to such a page. A page containing a form or another type of page allowing the user to participate in the subscription offered in step **210** is provided **214** for display by a browser that may request subscription

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information and subscription information is received **216**
using conventional CGI techniques. The subscription
information may include a number of shares or a dollar
amount the user wishes to pledge. Although the web page
5    may contain form fields allowing the user to specify a
number of shares, there may be buttons on the page, each
specifying a different dollar amount, allowing the user to
subscribe using a single click.

A number of users who have subscribed to the fund is
10   incremented **218** and the dollar amount pledged is added to a
total **220** maintained by the operator of the web site or the
brokerage or other entity. Steps **218** and **220** record the
cumulative total number of investors in the fund and the
amount to be invested for multiple different users of the
15   web site. Any of steps **216, 218** or **220** may include logging
some or all of the subscription information along with an
account number of the user and a date or date and time.

If the subscription period has ended **222**, the number
of subscribers in the fund or the cumulative dollar amount
20   or both are provided **224** to the fund management. If the
subscription period has not ended **222**, the method continues
at step **210** for the same user or for another user.

In an alternate embodiment of the present invention, step **216** may include logging the subscription information from the user, and steps **218** and **220** may follow the yes branch of step **222** using the logged information.  This

5    allows the information to be logged as it is received, but cumulated after the subscription period ends.

An apparatus may be used that implements the above steps.  A home page provider may implement step **210** and a web page request receiver may implement step **212**.  A form

10   provider implements step **214** and a subscription information receiver implements step **216**.  A subscriber incrementer implements step **218** and a dollar amount cumulator implements step **220**.  An information provider implements step **222** and the apparatus that implements any of steps **216**

15   - **224** may implement step **222**.  Connections are provided between all of these elements, or only some of them as required by the information flow.  An apparatus input/output may be coupled to the Internet at one end and coupled to the home page provider, form provider, and

20   subscription information receiver.  An apparatus output may be coupled to the information provider, and an output device such as a printer or a tape drive or to the Internet to communicate with the management of the fund.

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What is claimed is:

1.    A method of receiving a subscription to a mutual fund, the method comprising:

receiving a request for a home page;

providing the home page comprising a notice of a

5    subscription offering and a link to a web page;

receiving a request for the web page;

providing web page information allowing a user to subscribe to the mutual fund responsive to the receiving the request for the web page; and

10    receiving an indication of an amount of money to be invested in the mutual fund.

2.    The method of claim 1, wherein the method additionally comprises communicating a total amount of money to be invested in the mutual fund responsive to the amount of money received.

3.    The method of claim 1 wherein all of the steps are performed via the Internet.

4.    The method of claim 1 wherein the web page comprises the web page information.

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5. The method of claim 1 wherein the web page comprises a link that may be followed to an additional web page comprising the web page information.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the steps of claim 1 are performed for each of a plurality of users and the method additionally comprises the steps of:

accumulating the amounts of money from each of the
5   plurality of users; and

providing to a mutual fund management the amounts of money accumulated.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the notice comprises a banner.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the banner comprises one selected from a scrolling banner and an animated banner.

9. A computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein for receiving a subscription to a mutual fund, the computer program product comprising:

5   computer readable program code devices configured to cause a computer to receive a request for a home page;

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computer readable program code devices configured to cause a computer to provide the home page comprising a notice of a subscription offering and a link to a web page;

10    computer readable program code devices configured to cause a computer to receive a request for the web page;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause a computer to provide web page information allowing a user to subscribe to the mutual fund responsive to the

15    receiving the request for the web page; and

computer readable program code devices configured to cause a computer to receive an indication of an amount of money to be invested in the mutual fund.

10.    The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the computer program product additionally comprises computer readable program code devices configured to cause a computer to communicate a total amount of money to be

5    invested in the mutual fund responsive to the amount of money received.

11.    The computer program product of claim 9 wherein all of the computer readable program code devices use the Internet.

12.    The computer program product of claim 9 wherein the web page comprises the web page information.

13.   The computer program product of claim 9 wherein the web page comprises a link that may be followed to an additional web page comprising the web page information.

14.   The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the computer readable program code devices of claim 9 are performed for each of a plurality of users and the computer program product additionally comprises:

5   computer readable program code devices configured to cause a computer to accumulate the amounts of money from each of the plurality of users; and

computer readable program code devices configured to cause a computer to provide to a mutual fund management the

10   amounts of money accumulated.

15.   The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the notice comprises a banner.

16.   The computer program product of claim 15 wherein the banner comprises one selected from a scrolling banner and an animated banner.

15

## Abstract of the Disclosure

A method and apparatus provides on a home page of a web site information about a mutual fund subscription and a link which may be followed to a web page which may be used

5    to subscribe to the fund online.

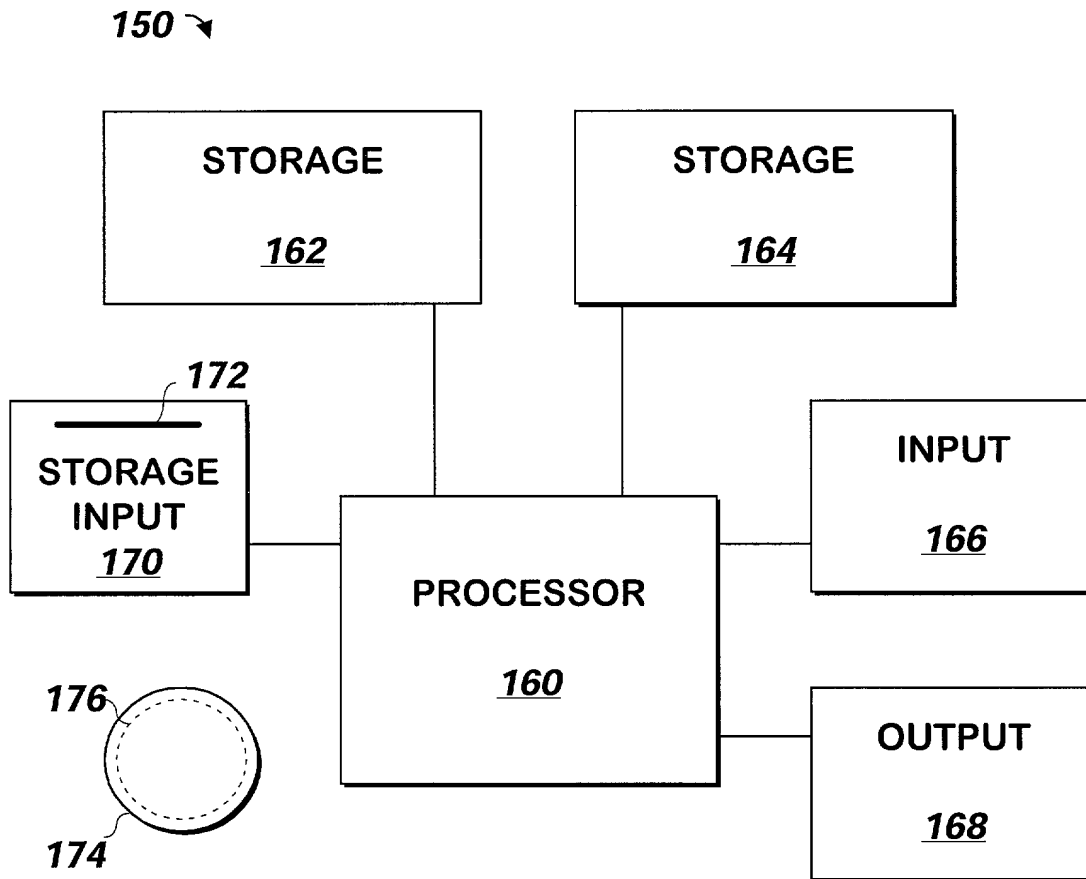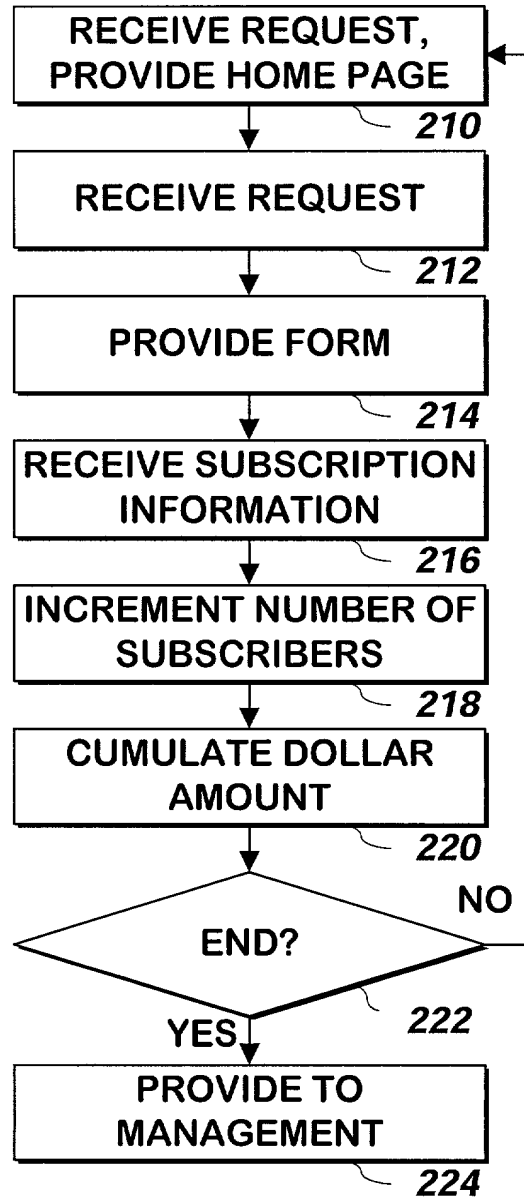16

150 ⬎

| STORAGE | STORAGE |
|---------|---------|
| *162* | *164* |

172

| STORAGE INPUT | PROCESSOR | INPUT |
|---------------|-----------|-------|
| *170* | *160* | *166* |

176

174

| OUTPUT |
|--------|
| *168* |

**FIG. 1**
(PRIOR ART)

```
┌──────────────────────────────┐
│    RECEIVE REQUEST,          │◀─┐
│    PROVIDE HOME PAGE         │  │
└──────────────────────────────┘  │
              │    ⌐ 210           │
              ▼                    │
┌──────────────────────────────┐  │
│      RECEIVE REQUEST          │  │
└──────────────────────────────┘  │
              │    ⌐ 212           │
              ▼                    │
┌──────────────────────────────┐  │
│        PROVIDE FORM           │  │
└──────────────────────────────┘  │
              │    ⌐ 214           │
              ▼                    │
┌──────────────────────────────┐  │
│   RECEIVE SUBSCRIPTION        │  │
│      INFORMATION              │  │
└──────────────────────────────┘  │
              │    ⌐ 216           │
              ▼                    │
┌──────────────────────────────┐  │
│  INCREMENT NUMBER OF          │  │
│      SUBSCRIBERS              │  │
└──────────────────────────────┘  │
              │    ⌐ 218           │
              ▼                    │
┌──────────────────────────────┐  │
│    CUMULATE DOLLAR            │  │
│       AMOUNT                  │  │
└──────────────────────────────┘  │
              │    ⌐ 220           │
              ▼             NO     │
        ◇──────────◇──────────────┘
        │   END?   │
        ◇──────────◇
          ⌐ 222
       YES │
           ▼
┌──────────────────────────────┐
│     PROVIDE TO                │
│    MANAGEMENT                 │
└──────────────────────────────┘
           ⌐ 224
```

*FIG. 2*

Type a plus sign (+) inside this box ->  $\boxed{+}$

| 0010/PTO<br>Rev 6/95 | U.S. Department of Commerce<br>Patent and Trademark Office | **Attorney Docket Number** | 1142 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **First Named Inventor** | Keith Rose |
| **DECLARATION** | | *COMPLETE IF KNOWN* | |
| | | Application Number | |
| | | Filing Date | 2/11/2000 |
| ☒ Declaration Submitted with Initial Filing OR ☐ Declaration Submitted after Initial Filing | | Group Art Unit | |
| | | Examiner Name | |

**As a below named Inventor, I hereby declare that:**

My residence, post office address, and citizenship are as stated below next to my name

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled :

---

### METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR RECEIVING A SUBSCRIPTION FOR A SECURITY

---

the specification of which        *(Title of the Invention)*

☒     is attached hereto

OR

☐     was filed on MM/DD/YYYY     [                    ] as United States Application Number or PCT International

Application Number [                ] and was amended on (MM/DD/YYYY) [                ] (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to above

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37 Code of Federal Regulations, 1 56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code § 119 (a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application for which priority is claimed

| Prior Foriegn Application Number(s) | Country | Foreign Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY) | Priority Not Claimed | Copy Attached?<br>Yes        No |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ☐<br>☐<br>☐<br>☐ | ☐  ☐<br>☐  ☐<br>☐  ☐<br>☐  ☐ |

☐   Additional foreign application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority sheet attached hereto:

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

| **Application Number(s)** | **Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | ☐ | Additional provisional application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority sheet attached hereto |

# DECLARATION

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States of America, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code § 112. I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application

| U.S. Parent Application Number | PCT Parent Number | Parent Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY) | Parent Patent Number *(if applicable)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

☐ Additional U.S. or PCT international application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority sheet attached hereto.

As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

**Firm Name** Law Offices of Charles E. Gotlieb

**Payor Number** (if applicable) 526-59-8207

| Name | Registration Number | Name | Registration Number |
|---|---|---|---|
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|---|---|---|

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

**Name of Sole or First Inventor:** ☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inventor's Signature | | | | | | Date | 2/3/00 | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

☒ Additional inventors are being named on supplemental sheet(s) attached hereto

| DECLARATION | ADDITIONAL INVENTOR(S) |
|---|---|
| | Supplemental Sheet |

**Name of Additional Joint Inventor, If any:** ☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Inventor's Signature | *Karin K. Riley* | | Date | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Name of Additional Joint Inventor, If any:** ☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

| Given Name | Coreen | Middle Initial | | Family Name | Kaplan | | | Suffix | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Inventor's Signature | *Coreen Kaplan* | | Date | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**POST OFFICE ADDRESS** 3471 19th Street

| City | San Francisco | State | CA | Zip | 94110 | Country | US | Applicant Authority | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Name of Additional Joint Inventor, If any:** ☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

| Given Name | | Middle Initial | | Family Name | | | | Suffix | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Inventor's Signature | | | Date | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| RESIDENCE: City | | State | | Country | | Citizenship | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**POST OFFICE ADDRESS**

| City | | State | | Zip | | Country | | Applicant Authority | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Name of Additional Joint Inventor, If any:** ☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

| Given Name | | Middle Initial | | Family Name | | | | Suffix | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Inventor's Signature | | | Date | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| RESIDENCE: City | | State | | Country | | Citizenship | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**POST OFFICE ADDRESS**

| City | | State | | Zip | | Country | | Applicant Authority | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

☐ Additional inventors are being named on supplemental sheet(s) attached hereto

| DECLARATION | | ATTORNEY and/or AGENT INFORMATION (Supplemental Sheet) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Name** | **Registration Number** | **Name** | **Registration Number** |
| **Brian Keating** | **39,520** | | |